

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 /116 W
-----015149 282321Z /64

R 281637Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1632
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 5659

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR ET SO
SUBJECT: VISIT OF CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO ROME

1. MFA GAVE US BRIEFING MARCH 28 ON MEETING LAST WEEK BETWEEN
CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER MALMIERCA AND ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER
FORLANI. ACCORDING TO MFA, FORLANI REMINDED MALMIERCA OF
CUBAN COMMITMENTS (MADE BY VICE-PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ TO ITALIAN
AMBASSADOR IN HAVANA AND BY CUBAN AMBASSADOR IN ROME TO FORLANI
HIMSELF) THAT AS SOON AS SOMALIS LEFT OGADEN, CUBANS WOULD
1) BEGIN THEIR WITHDRAWAL FROM HORN, 2) WOULD ENCOURAGE ETHIOPIANS
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TO NEGOTIATE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WITH SOMALIS, AND 3) WOULD NOT
INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN ERITREA.

2. MALMIERCA CLAIMED THAT CUBAN POLICY HAS NOT CHANGED,
BUT TO ITALIANS IT IS OBVIOUS THAT IT HAS. MALMIERCA
SAID THAT SOMALI WITHDRAWAL WAS ONLY MILITARY PRECONDITION
FOR CUBAN WITHDRAWAL, BUT NOW POLITICAL PRECONDITIONS MUST

BE MET AS WELL. THESE, ACCORDING TO MFA, ARE IDENTICAL TO MAXIMUM ETHIOPIAN DEMANDS ON SOMALIS INCLUDING NOT ONLY RENUNCIATION OF ALL TERRITORIAL CLAIMS BUT ALSO CONCOMITANT CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATIONS.

3. AS TO ERITREA, MALMIERCA SAID THAT CUBANS STILL FAVOR POLITICAL SETTLEMENT BETWEEN EPMG AND ERITREANS BUT NOW CONSIDER THE SITUATION THERE TO HAVE CHANGED. SINCE THE "REACTIONARY" ARAB REGIMES ARE SUPPORTING THE ERITREANS, THE ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED FROM AN INTERNAL REVOLT FOR AUTONOMY TO A REBELLION SUPPORTED BY OUTSIDE FORCES--ANALOGOUS TO THE OGADEN CONFLICT. FURTHERMORE, THE ERITREAN STARTING POINT FOR NEGOTIATIONS, AS STATED IN KHARTOUM, IS FULL INDEPENDENCE FROM ETHIOPIA: THIS TO THE CUBANS IS NOT THE BASIS UPON WHICH TO NEGOTIATE BUT RATHER CONSTITUTES ANOTHER THREAT TO ETHIOPIAN TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY--JUST AS IN THE OGADEN.

4. ITALIANS BELIEVE THAT CUBANS HAVE NOT FINALLY MADE UP THEIR MINDS ABOUT WHAT TO DO IN ERITREA BUT CONVERSATION LT WITH MALMIERCA WAS OMINOUS. NEVERTHELESS, WHILE CUBANS MAKE JUSTIFICATION ALONG LINES OF THOSE USED IN OGADEN, THEY, AND SOVIETS, KNOW THAT ERITREAN BATTLE WOULD BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT AND MIGHT INVOLVE UNACCEPTABLE COMMITMENT OF MEN, MONEY AND TIME. GARDNER

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